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CLOTHING-STORAGE RESULT DEMONSTRATION /1

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The Background

The war brought with it curtailment of materials, and higher costs and lower quality of clothing for the civilian. County councils of homemaker groups immediately saw the necessity of taking care of all clothing on hand. Included in all county programs were demonstrations on the care and conservation of clothing. In one county a special need for better clothing storage was apparent to the home demonstration agent and the clothing specialist. Most of the homes had little space or poorly planned and arranged space for storing clothes. The problem presenting itself was how to help the farm women become aware of their problem and to realize that something concrete could be done about it. However, it was understood that many women were conscious of the fact that their homes were often cluttered with clothing and laundry and oftentimes, after seasonal storage, clothes had been attacked by pests. Very little was being done to remedy the situation.

After discussing the clothing needs of the county at a planning conference, the home demonstration agent and the clothing specialist decided that a good plan of attack would be to establish a result demonstration. This should be in the home of a leader of a community group who had been asking for individual help. The result demonstration seemed a good method to use as it would allow for direct planning with a family. It would also give an opportunity to know more about the homes of the community and to check ideas to see if they were really practical. By inviting people to view the demonstration, an interest might be aroused for homemaker-club program work and for setting up other result demonstrations.

Analyzing the Situation

After the situation in the county had been reviewed, the next problem was to select an enthusiastic family whose home was representative of the county and whose location was such that it could be reached by a relatively large group of people. The Neal Family, as a typical Cochise County family in a ranching and farming area, were selected to be the result demonstrators. Their selection grew out of the fact that they had been adding storage space to their home, had asked for some advice from extension workers, and Mrs. Neal was a clothing leader and president of a homemakers' club. The family consisted of father, age 33; mother, age 30; and three children, ages 12, 9, and 8.

Eight years ago the Neal Family moved to their present location. For 5 months they lived in a tent. At that time they started development of their home. They built one room, but had a plan for future development. Since then they have added three bedrooms, hall, dining room, kitchen, bath, closets, pantry, and back porch. One of the influencing factors in the development of this home has been the coming of rural electrification.

/1 One of a series of case histories prepared for use in the Conference To Outline the Contribution of Extension Methods and Techniques Toward the Rehabilitation of War-torn Countries, held in Washington, D.C., September 19 to 22, 1944. Extension Service and Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations cooperating.

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The Neal Family do all their own work. This includes not only sewing for their own family but also relatives and friends. They have their own garden, chickens, rabbits, pigs, and cows. They do canning and make butter and cheese.

Mr. Neal, a carpenter, has built the present storage conveniences and expects to give his full cooperation to this storage project. Though other homes may not have the skilled type of construction in their storage, the Neal home will serve as an inspiration and model.

Mrs. Neal is one of the busiest women of the community, acting as president of one of the largest homemakers groups in the county. She served as clothing leader for 5 years. She has served as 4-H Club leader and takes an active part in church and Red Cross. She has offered her home for this result demonstration, hoping to influence the storage practices in her own home and in other homes of the community and county. She feels that her family will benefit by this experience.

The best time to start the demonstration seemed to be in the summer, when the children were at home to help and before the club work started in the fall. If some progress were made by fall, a group meeting could be held at the demonstration home. The group would then know how the demonstration was started and of the plans to carry it on.

Planning

After selecting the family and gaining their cooperation, the home demonstration agent knew that to have a successful result demonstration she would have to plan for conferences with the Neal Family to make short- and long-time storage plans; get help from the State extension office for supplementary suggestions; make supervisory visits to the Neal home; have community meetings, publicity, records, and reports. It was decided to have the clothing specialist present at the first conference at the home when the storage problems of the family would be listed and the short- and long-time goals would be set. The clothing specialist would also accompany the home demonstration agent on supervisory visits when she was in the county. The number of supervisory visits would be determined by the need as the project developed. At least two community meetings were planned for; one to be held soon after the demonstration was started and one after there were more results to be shown. Mrs. Neal would also report progress of the project at community-club and county clothing meetings. The home demonstration agent would report the method of setting up the result demonstration and its progress at State meetings.

Sequence of Events

As the plan was being made, it was learned that Miss Mary Rokahr, home management specialist of the National Extension office was to be in the State during the summer. It seemed timely to have her assist in setting up the result demonstration. Also, since Mrs. Neal was well acquainted with extension work and workers, it seemed a good opportunity to have two neighboring home demonstration agents attend in order to gain information from Miss Rokahr.

At this first conference the extension workers with Mrs. Neal went over her home, checking the clothing storage as it was, listing problems, and making suggestions for changes. Mrs. Neal was well prepared before the conference and was willing that her home be checked carefully by the workers.

Following this conference, the home demonstration agent and clothing specialist checking again with Mrs. Neal, wrote up the project in the form of long-time and 1943-44 goals, and the present clothing storage situation in each room with suggested changes.

Since the community had no idea of the meaning of a result demonstration, time was given at a regular club meeting to discuss the meaning of a result demonstration. This was done by the home demonstration agent and Mrs. Neal. After this educational work, Mrs. Neal invited all members of the club to visit her home and hear of the plan for each room. Thirty-two women were present, and every detail was explained. This was the most effective publicity used. Nearly every woman present said, "I'm going to use this suggestion in my room." Mrs. Neal announced that all members of the club were welcome to "stop in" any time to take measurements or to ask her husband's advice on construction. This created a personal interest in all the Neals were doing.

The home demonstration agent gave a report of this to other homemaker clubs in the county and to the State extension conference.

Evaluation of Results

The use of the result demonstration to teach others, and arouse interest in a problem and its solution has proved effective even in the short time this demonstration has been established. Part of the effectiveness, no doubt, has been due to the timeliness of the subject.

The Neals would have much more to report if Mr. Neal's time had not been used on contracts away from home. This has left all the farm work to Mrs. Neal and the children. However, the following has been done: Three clothes closets have been reorganized; well-marked boxes have been added for shelf storage; shoe racks have been made for the boy's closet; clothes have been rearranged by putting Mrs. Neal's on one side of the closet and Mr. Neal's on the opposite side; garment bags have been added to protect better clothes; a hobby shelf has been added to the daughter's room; dividers have been added in all dresser drawers. Special attention has been given to sewing-equipment storage. Dividers have been added in drawers used for storing sewing supplies. A sewing cabinet has been made which will serve as a cutting and sewing table with storage space below. Most of this was constructed of orange crates. Boxes and materials have been collected to complete upstairs attic storage, and only time has kept this from being done. A shelf is ready to be nailed in place for the vacuum cleaner.

In addition to being of benefit to the Neal Family, interest was aroused in the county to the extent that it seemed wise to change the county homemaker clubs' clothing program plans and include method demonstrations on clothing storage for 2 months' work. A check on the club work done shows the following results: 35 articles have been made for shoe storage and 50 for sewing storage. Probably 25 homemakers have divided drawer space with removable trays or dividers of various kinds.

The home demonstration agent and clothing leaders have given follow-up demonstrations in 10 communities. Homemakers are certainly conscious of the lack of storage for clothes and sewing equipment which means that much more will be done as time and material become available.

A factor that has helped to encourage the rural women to attempt this project has been the constant supervision of the home demonstration agent and the State clothing specialist. The clothing specialist has made 10 home visits, helped to plan improvements and to check on suggestions after they have been worked out. This personal interest is important in giving confidence to attempt new practices.

As a far-reaching result of the work started on clothing storage in one county, 3 other counties have planned for the work on their 1944 programs. This work is to include establishing result demonstrations as well as having method demonstrations for club groups.